

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Kayli Rego
OPAWL
Testifying as Proponent

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Kayli Rego, I live in Columbus, Ohio, and I am on the curriculum creation committee at OPAWL. I am a freshman at The Ohio State University, and I am asking this committee to support updating Ohio's K-12 social studies model curriculum to reflect all Ohioans' backgrounds and histories in order to help our kids understand the world, build empathy, and create better futures.

Including Asian American history in Ohio's K-12 model curriculum is important to me because...

I'm a Chinese Adoptee with a multiracial identity. As a young child, I caught the double-takes and prolonged stares followed by awkward smiles directed towards my family. It was as if I were a zoo animal; an attraction to be gawked and marveled at. I despised my Chinese-American adoptee identity. Imposter syndrome became my best friend and followed me into my teenage years.

After the covid lockdown, I decided to push myself out of my comfort zone to advocate to support anti-asian hate and unrepresentative schooling that continues to plague our country. For the first time in my life, I understood the value of my adoptee identity. I harnessed my dysphoric and inferior feelings to become catalysts to petition legislators to include representative content in classrooms. Within education, we can provide marginalized students an equal chance to express themselves as well as eradicate ignorance towards unfamiliar cultures. My former perceived downfall became an asset. Through the American aspects of my identity, I connect with legislators with whom I share common American culture. Through my Chinese appearance, I represent those for whom I advocate. No student deserves to experience what I endured throughout my school years, however, it is never too late to show our students that they

have a voice in their classrooms and society. It's time for teachers and faculty in our schools to be the change in their students, to show their vested interest in their student's well being. Because of this, I respectfully and strongly encourage the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to support the passage of HB 171. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation.